

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method, comprising:
 - displaying an interface screen to allow an applicant from a first company to enter a non-disclosure agreement number corresponding to a non-disclosure agreement;
 - determining whether the non-disclosure agreement number matches a non-disclosure agreement number in authorization data as part of a request for access from an applicant;
 - if not, sending a denial email to the applicant;
 - if so, determining whether the [[a]] first company has executed the [[a]] non-disclosure agreement;
 - if so, determining whether the [[an]] applicant is associated with the first company;
 - if so, displaying an interface screen comprising terms of an authorized disclosure letter and further displaying a choice of accepting the terms or not;
 - determining whether the applicant agrees to the ~~disclosure~~ terms; and
 - if the applicant agrees to the terms, displaying an interface screen to allow the applicant to select one of a plurality of programs, each of which is associated with a corresponding list of company names authorized to exchange information with the applicant; and
 - responsive to a selection by the applicant of one of the plurality of programs, displaying the corresponding list of company names;
 - responsive to a selection by the applicant of a second company name from the list of company names, providing the applicant with access to information belonging to the [[a]] second company.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the information comprises confidential information belonging to the second company.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
determining whether the first company is authorized to a program.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the second company is authorized to the program.

5. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the information is associated with the program.

6. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the program comprises a joint-development program in which the first and second companies are participants.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
determining whether an owner of a program gives approval for the first company to participate in the program.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
determining whether a field representative gives approval for the first company to participate in a program.

9. (Currently Amended) An apparatus, comprising:
a controller to allow participants in a program to exchange information regarding a program when the participants agree to terms in an authorized disclosure letter and when the participants are authorized according to authorization data;
wherein the authorization data comprises data regarding employees associated with the participants; and
wherein the authorization data comprises data regarding non-disclosure agreements executed by the participants.

10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the authorization data comprises data regarding which companies are authorized to the program.

11-12. (Canceled)

13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the program comprises a joint-development program in which the participants participate.

14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the information comprises confidential information belonging to the respective participants.

15. (Original) A signal-bearing medium comprising instructions, wherein the instructions when read and executed by a processor comprise:

- displaying an interface screen that allows a user to enter a non-disclosure agreement number;

- when the non-disclosure agreement number is valid, displaying terms of an authorized disclosure letter; and

- when the user agrees to the terms, providing the user with access to information belonging to a participant in a program.

16. (Original) The signal-bearing medium of claim 15, wherein the instructions further comprise:

- providing an access control interface, wherein the access control interface allows the participant to control access to the information.

17. (Original) The signal-bearing medium of claim 15, wherein the instructions further comprise:

- providing a request access interface, wherein the request access interface allows the user to request access to the information.

18. (Original) The signal-bearing medium of claim 15, wherein the instructions further comprise:

- providing a display of companies who are participants in the program.

19. (Original) The signal-bearing medium of claim 15, wherein the instructions further comprise:
providing a display of companies authorized to exchange information with the user on a per-program basis.

20. (Original) The signal-bearing medium of claim 15, wherein the instructions further comprise:
providing a display of contact information for the participant in the program.

21. (Original) The signal-bearing medium of claim 15, wherein the instructions further comprise:
managing the information.

22. (Original) The signal-bearing medium of claim 21, wherein managing the information further comprises at least one of adding, viewing, deleting, and updating the information.

23. (Currently Amended) A server to facilitate exchange of confidential information about a plurality of controlled-communication programs, comprising:

a processor; and

a memory, comprising: to store an authorized disclosure letter, authorization data, and a controller having a plurality of instructions;

a display;

an input device; and

a processor communicatively coupled to the memory and the display, the processor to execute selected ones of the instructions to:

display an interface screen on the display to allow an applicant from a first company to enter into the input device a non-disclosure agreement number corresponding to a non-disclosure agreement;

determine whether the non-disclosure agreement number matches a non-disclosure agreement number in authorization data as part of a request for access from an applicant;

if so, determine whether the first company has executed the non-disclosure agreement;

if so, determine whether the applicant is associated with the first company;

if so, display an interface screen on the display comprising terms of an authorized disclosure letter and further displaying a choice of accepting the terms or not;

determine whether the applicant agrees to the terms, using the input device;

if the applicant agrees to the terms, display an interface screen on the display to allow the applicant to select, using the input device, one of a plurality of controlled-communication programs, each of which is associated with a corresponding list of company names authorized to exchange information with the applicant;

responsive to a selection by the applicant, using the input device, of one of the plurality of programs, display the corresponding list of company names on the display; and

responsive to a selection by the applicant, using the input device, of a second company name from the list of company names, provide the applicant with access to information belonging to the second company

~~a controller to execute on the processor to allow participants in a program to exchange information regarding a program when the participants agree to terms in the authorized disclosure letter and when the participants are authorized according to the authorization data.~~

24-26. (Canceled)